

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

July 14, 2005, 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

MSU-Great Falls College of Technology

Great Falls, Montana

The July 14, 2005 meeting of the Montana Board of Education was called to order by Governor Brian Schweitzer.

ROLL CALL

Members present were: Regents Steve Barrett, Mike Foster, Lynn Morrison-Hamilton, John Mercer, Mark Semmens, Lila Taylor, and Board of Public Education members Dr. Kirk Miller, Diane Fladmo, Cal Gilbert, John Fuller, Patty Myers, Gay Ann Masolo and Jack Jessop. Ex-officio members present were Governor Schweitzer, and Commissioner Stearns. Superintendent McCulloch was represented by Deputy Superintendent Bud Williams.

Mary Moe, Dean of Great Falls College of Technology welcomed the Board to the facility and announced plans for a reception at Giant Springs State Park.

Governor Schweitzer opened the meeting with comments on education and economic development. He stated that:

- Shared leadership was working to keep Montana moving forward.
- The state had put more than 80 million dollars into education over the last biennium.
- There is a need for higher education to be rapidly responsive to current career fields.
- The state put significant resources into Indian Education for All so all students will know the rich cultural history of the first Montanans.
- The Board of Education and the Legislature have agreed that Montana needs to make higher education more accessible and affordable.
- Montana needs to graduate high school students prepared to go to the next level of education.
- The money invested in education this past session was accomplished without raising taxes.

Budget director David Ewer stated that 2005 was a historic session with more than \$88 million appropriated for K-12 education which increased ANB funding. He acknowledged that the work was not completed and that the Legislature had a constitutional obligation to provide a basic system of quality education. The Legislature defined what quality education is and the next step is to determine a funding formula.

Mr. Ewer stated that the Schweitzer administration was very proud of the money put into higher education. There was a \$70 million increase from all sources. There had been no long term bond program before and that the Schweitzer administration had supported the bond program. There is a lot going into the two year education programs. Two million dollars of new money was put into a scholarship program and \$10.5 million in workforce development. There remains

a problem between what Montanans are making and tuition costs. Montana needs to keep tuition growth down and narrow the gap between salary and tuition.

Governor Schweitzer commented that there had been negative funding for many years which leaves a lot of ground to make up. He stated that raising tuition costs was a big concern and that the high cost of tuition was pricing middle class families out of higher education.

Regent Semmens thanked David Ewer and Amy Carlson for their work with the Regents and stated that the Regents anticipated working closely with the budget office to accomplish the goals raised by Governor Schweitzer. He also stated that the motivation for an increased pay plan is to maintain quality personnel.

Governor Schweitzer introduced Jan Lombardi as his recent appointment as education policy advisor.

Jan Lombardi discussed the Schweitzer administration's vision for education.

- Living within our means with a sustainable budget.
- Strengthen the economic vitality of families in Montana.
- 19% of our children come from families of poverty with about 1/3 of the children eligible for free and reduced lunch.
- Education is the ticket for kids to get out of poverty which will make a real difference in the lives of Montana's kids and families.
- Indian Education For All – Montana has violated its responsibility in the past. Now all students will have a chance to know the rich cultural heritage of its first people and our Indian students will see themselves in the curriculum.
- All Montana youth need a high school diploma or GED and then move on to some form of higher education.
- The Schweitzer administration is committed to economic development in Indian country – education is the key.
- Montana students need to be able to afford to go to college without breaking the family budget.
- 500 students next year will begin 2 or 4 year programs with the help of the scholarship program.
- Students need to graduate on time, whether it's a 2 or 4 year program. Solving the credit transfer problem is a must to make this happen.

Ms. Lombardi stated that in 1950 and now – the need for professionals has stayed the same, but skilled labor has jumped from 20% to 65% and that Montana needs our colleges of technology, 2 year colleges, and tribal colleges more than ever. Montana needs to have more focus on job training and apprenticeship programs and to work on distance learning to help families in out-lying areas.

Steve Meloy asked if Jan would be taking an active part in the Leadership Group and the Board of Education. Governor Schweitzer stated that she would and they could off load work to Jan.

Commissioner Stearns welcomed Jan and stated that the Leadership Group has played a key role developing the agenda for the Board of Education. She stated that the committees were doing a lot of work, but without the Leadership Group and staffing from OPI and OCHE it wouldn't happen. She also stated her appreciation for working with budget director David Ewer and Amy Carlson. She stated she looked forward to working with Governor Schweitzer to close the tuition/salary gap.

Governor Schweitzer stated that in order for Montana to be competitive in our region, Montana needs to be competitive with people around the world – we need to have tax, regulatory and education policies that are better than those around the world. Governor Schweitzer has met with many people looking to invest in Montana, but they want to know if Montana has the ability to deliver the trained people they need for jobs and for retraining. An investment in bringing new jobs to Montana has everything to do with education. Montana needs to attract bright Montanans who have left our state and encourage them to come back to Montana. Governor Schweitzer sent a letter to 500 people who had graduated in Montana. He received 300 responses to create Montana Tech ambassadors – Seattle branch. The goal is to push the benefits of a life in Montana and bring these kids home. Montana needs to have safe communities, good schools, and a university system that will crank out the kinds of disciplines that they need for their businesses.

Governor Schweitzer said that the Board's first homework assignment is to determine what progress has been made regarding transferability of credits. He doesn't feel we're serving Montana students adequately until this problem is solved. He stated we need to graduate a higher percentage of high school students. The next homework assignment is to determine how. He also stated that the Board needs to put together positive steps on how to implement Indian Education for All. The next time the Board meets he would also like a plan on how to close tuition/salary gap.

The next homework assignment is that the Board needs to have a contract with every family in Montana that at the end of high school they will have a world class education and at the university level, if they do their part for 2-4 years, they will have a degree that will prepare them for their field of study.

Regent Mercer thanked Governor Schweitzer for his enthusiasm. He stated that the Board of Education is trying to do something good for education and he feels that today the Board is taking another step in energizing education. He thanked the Governor for appointing Jan as full time helper for the Board. He stated that what remains to be done is to give greater vision for what it is that Board is going to do. He would like to see continuing involvement in order to be more effective as the Board of Education. The Board of Regents would like to see representation from the Governor at the Board of Regents meetings. He is hoping that Jan will bring the Governor's ideas to the Regents. He stated that the Board of Regents took on the transferability of credit issue and is working on aggressive changes. He commended the Governor in his plan to involve Montana university alumni groups.

Regent Mercer invited the Governor to serve on the Indian Education for All subcommittee. He felt that would elevate the Indian education issue. He also thanked the Governor for embracing

Shared Leadership. He stated that one of the things still missing is the concept of setting goals for Montana. We need to set goals on the poverty/tuition gap. Regent Mercer stated that the Board of Regents is actively working on workforce development and hopes the momentum will continue. He stated that the Board of Education has a great opportunity to set policy directions for the state and that the Governor was starting to make that happen.

Dr. Miller thanked Governor Schweitzer for his leadership ability. He stated he liked the ambassador program and committed the Board of Public Education and the K-12 community to those efforts. He stated his appreciation for the Governor's appointment of Jan Lombardi as the Governor's Education policy advisor. He advised the Governor that the Board of Public Education had a planning session yesterday and that the assignments he gave were part of that discussion. Economic development will occur as a result of training. Dr. Miller recognized Diane Fladmo and stated that she will be assuming the duties of the President of the National State Boards of Education. Joan Schmidt of Montana is assuming the duties of the President of the National School Boards Association. These are indicators of how well Montana is doing at a national level and how well we are doing in education.

Dr. Miller reminded the Board that the school renewal commission happened as a result of work during the 2003 session. The 2005 Legislature addressed several of the recommendations of the commission and he is hopeful that the rest will be considered by Quality School Interim Committee. The committee is looking at the elements of a quality K-12 education to determine needs and then fund those needs. This is a very complicated process as every decision affects all of Montana in the pocket book.

The Board of Public Education is involved in an ongoing process of staying up-to-date on rulemaking and standards. A review of the accreditation standards is on a 5 year cycle. A review of the professional educator preparation program standards will be conducted within the next year. The Board of Public Education is focused on licensure rules and how to provide Montana with highly qualified teachers that meet federal mandates.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Diane Fladmo moved that the minutes of the January 19, 2005 meeting be approved as read. Patty Myers requested that a correction be made to designate the Board of Public Education members in the roll call. The correction was made and Patty Myers seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Governor Schweitzer introduced legislative leaders who were present, Senator Story, Representatives Lindeen, Juneau & Bixby.

Report from Quality Schools Interim Committee

Senator Story and Representative Lindeen reported to the Board on the status of the work of the Quality Schools Interim Committee. Representative Lindeen said that education funding is a serious issue that affects everyone in the state. They have a short timeline to complete their work and are making definite strides.

The 2005 Legislature passed SB 152, which defined quality and identified educationally relevant factors. SB 525 was passed to create the Quality Schools Interim Committee. They are working on conducting a needs assessment. The committee has hired a professional school assessment consultant. They are including the education community as working members which is important so that when we get to the end hopefully everyone will be in agreement. Their big concern is that everything that is done is defensible in court. Representative Lindeen stated her appreciation for the work of Superintendent McCulloch, Chairman Miller and Budget Director David Ewer. The committee members are committed to having a product the entire education community can agree on. Superintendent John McNeil from Savage is representing the rural schools, Dr. Messinger of Helena represents the big schools, and Superintendent Ivan Small of Poplar represents the Indian schools.

R.C. Wood and Associates out of Florida was selected through the RFP process to do the needs assessment. The committee has met with the Wood team to discuss their direction on the needs assessment. The committee met on June 28th and selected Stoddard and Young to prepare a educator compensation study and have them work with R.C. Wood to make sure there is no duplication. At the June 28th meeting R.C. Wood presented its draft of the measurement tools. R.C. Wood said the website would be up by July 5th and the schools would be able to complete an on line form. Members of the public also have a form to fill out. The deadline for completion of the surveys is the 25th of July. R.C. Wood's final report is due by September 30th. The committee plans on spending the month of October putting together draft legislation and getting public comment.

Senator Story said that they had a lot of work to do in a short time. They can't proceed until the studies are completed. They are trying to put together a methodology that's defensible. They have to decide how much money is needed, how to distribute it, and where the money is coming from.

The committee has worked on a distribution idea. The present distribution system is based on the number of kids present in school. They are working on a funding system that, instead of funding students, deals with the fixed costs. They are discussing funding classrooms, supporting service levels, funding levels per student and then transportation, long term maintenance and building construction. The Legislature took a step of faith when they made the accreditation standards the basis of the quality school system with the Board of Public Education in charge of determining the standards. The Legislature is not comfortable with that and it will take a lot of working together between the Legislature and Board of Public Education. Senator Story stated that the Legislature will need to be more of a presence in the process of developing standards.

Representative Lindeen commended Dr. Miller for the incredible amount of work he did with the committee during the session. She felt he played a large role in the committee coming out with a definition of quality education.

Regent Mercer thanked Senator Story and Representative Lindeen for volunteering for the committee. He asked if someone could advise them as to what they could expect from the

committee and the Legislature and asked where Indian Ed for All fits, is preserving rural schools an expectation, will there be property tax relief, will there be new taxes, and does the committee have to solve the retirement issue as well?

David Ewer replied that they are concerned about all of the points raised by Regent Mercer. All of this has to fit to satisfy the duty to fund a basic system. It has to be quality and has to be affordable. Rural schools have to be part of the equation and part of the solution has to focus on efficiency. The consultants have raised the issue of consolidation. The county portion of school funding has increased from 40-60%. The solution has to include tax fairness.

Governor Schweitzer noted that some schools are consolidating and that the Legislature needs to give rural communities tools to allow school boards to make appropriate decisions. He stated that it's not up to the state to dictate what happens in rural communities. The state needs to give them the tools in the funding mechanism.

Senator Story said the consolidation issue is one the Legislature won't deal with in a forceful way but in a way that provides incentives and that school districts in close proximity to another may not get the same amount of money so if the communities want to keep separate schools, they have to commit to the funding.

Regent Mercer asked Governor Schweitzer if the Legislature will be called into special session in December. He stated that a time table needs to be set with hard deadlines.

Governor Schweitzer replied that the administration is not driving this issue. The committee is doing the work and his office is monitoring and helping. They need to take the time to do it right.

Representative Lindeen stated that they have a timeline. The studies will hopefully be completed before Labor Day. They will take that information and the information from Stoddard and Young and hopefully in September put together a solution in a piece of draft legislation. First they have to know what it's going to cost as per the definition, then a formula needs to be developed and policy decisions made about the state's share. If more revenue is needed they have to determine how to make that happen and be fair to education and taxpayers. The committee is hoping to have a draft out in October. She stated that she doubted the process will be 100% finished by end of year. She stated that as long as the committee moves forward and makes strides the court should be fine. The plaintiffs in the lawsuit have said that they will hold off if they're making process.

Governor Schweitzer commented that we want to get it right this time so we don't have to do it again.

P-20 Committee Report

Diane Fladmo, Chair of the P-20 committee gave the committee report:

- The committee is continuing its work on public awareness.
- David Longenecker from WICHE is helping with strategic planning.

- OPI and OCHE are working together on designing an integrated data management system with input from other agencies. With this information policy decisions can be made based on research and data.
- The committee is working on dual enrollment to allow students to access college courses while in high school and receive credit for both. The P-20 Committee has approved many consensus points. A determination has to be made as to whether or not a course could replace a course in high school or if it would be an additional course offering. There are issues regarding college faculty and teacher licensing.

Commissioner Stearns commented that Diane had summarized the often heated and interesting discussion very well. This is a part of the homework to work on getting students a head start in college.

Regent Hamilton commented that allowing students to get credits before graduation would help lower the cost. This project can have a significant impact on the economic side of education.

Regent Semmens asked if the recommendations would be from the Board of Education to the Board of Public Education and then adopted as policy and if that's the case is this circulated to counselors and colleges? He wanted to know how much these recommendations vary from current practice and how this would affect the Advanced Placement program where students earn college credit for high school AP classes.

Diane stated that Advanced Placement isn't altered. Students may stay in high school for dual enrollment courses or attend at colleges. Even though the Board of Education may adopt recommendations, the Board of Public Education would still have to go through the rule making process. The committee is trying to bring consistency to the programs.

Patty Myers commented that we needed further dialogue on off-site delivery which is different than teaching the courses in the high schools.

Diane continued the Committee's report:

- The Board of Public Education has conducted a one year study on assessment alignment in K-12 education to decide the future of the Norm Reference Test. Assessment is a very complex issue and there are comments that there is too much assessment. The Board of Public Education has made an effort to look at the assessments required and may eliminate some. NCLB is adding areas of assessment as well. The Assessment Alignment Task Force will be reviewing existing information and work already done.
- The role of the school counselor is being actively debated. The counseling initiative will be moving forward under the guidance of the P-20 committee.
- The P-20 policy audit is provided by WICHE and the Ford Foundation. The Board of Education is responsible for long range planning and coordinating. Diane urged the Governor to work with the Board of Education to make this come to life. The audit will be used for outreach, curriculum and assessment, course offerings, vo-tech students, financial, high quality teachers, data and accountability.

Regent Hamilton reported on the college summit. There is a partnership between the two boards and the Student Assistance Foundation. This program has been in operation for about 10 years in various school districts. It has been successful in moving mid tier students that are better than their numbers but because of situations won't be offered scholarships but are able to do college work and succeed. They have workshops to train peer counselors who work with 50 high school seniors and are required to deliver, through peer to peer contact, the possibility and importance of going to college and to raise the awareness of the need for higher education.

Commissioner Stearns commended Regent Hamilton and Dr. Miller for being part of a team to see if Montana can become a college summit state

The Committee will be refining and modifying the administrative rules that define the standards for the professional educators preparation program. Dr. Linda Peterson is the Superintendent's liaison to the P-20 Committee. The first standards were promulgated in 1979 and have been reviewed/revised every 5 years.

Budget Committee Report

Mark Semmens reported that the Budget Committee needed Jan Lombardi to provide staffing assistance. The Board needs to better define what a unified budget is and then determine how to execute providing a unified budget. Their goal is that in advance of the next legislative session the Board will have made strides in presenting a more unified budget. The committee acknowledges that it is not going to get to a level where this board is involved in every level of budget development on both sides. They do think there is an opportunity for the Board of Public Education and the Board of Regents to have input into development of a budget prior to coming back to the table at the Board of Education to make a recommendation. With Jan's assistance they are going to define and bring back to this board a definition of unified budget and a recommendation of how to execute it in advance of next session.

Regent Mercer stated that this is one of the Board's big challenges. The constitution says the Board of Education is to present a unified budget. This has never been done. To the extent that the Governor's office can weigh in on what is expected would be very helpful.

Indian Education for All Committee Report

Roger Barber – Deputy Commissioner for academic affairs at OCHE – provided a written report. He stated that he had participated in hearings at the Legislature and asked for a modest amount of money to figure out what the constitutional mandate meant to the university system. They did not receive funding but the university system has committed to its first project to put together a work group to determine what it means. The university community is trying to figure out if they have the same mandate as for K-12 or if it's something else. They will have a report for the 2007 Legislature and will come back with a money request to fund what they need to do. The education system is trying to build Indian Education for All into the curriculum. Reno Charette prepared a model program at MSU-Billings. Dr. Larry Baker at MSU-Bozeman is offering an on line course this summer. As a result of this pilot project he will be traveling around the state

asking for input. From that he will gather with people who have developed courses to modify and move forward.

Governor Schweitzer asked what the cost was to develop the course and the cost to take the course.

Roger Barber replied that development would cost \$3,000-5,000 and that it's a 3 credit graduate course at \$195 for instate students per credit.

Bud Williams reported on OPI's work with Indian Education for All. OPI asked for \$500,000 which was raised to \$2 million and increased by another \$1.4 million. Superintendent McCulloch has made this one of the highest priorities in the office. An institute was conducted in June at the University of Montana where educators across Montana met. Indian educators in that area were instrumental in helping get started. Next week they start working with educators on curriculum for social studies. Educators representing Indian schools and non-Indian schools will be working together. OPI's Indian Education Division is working on a public information campaign regarding Indian Education for All. Fifty grants will be given to school districts to work on this curriculum.

Regent Mercer said that he was a new member of the committee and would like the Governor on the committee. He invited both President Dennison and President Gamble to give short reports on new structures that they are planning on the campuses.

President Dennison said that the University of Montana is planning to build a new center for Indian Education which will provide a place on campus where elders and others can meet, offer instruction and historic displays.

President Gamble said that Montana State University has in design phase a cultural education center for Indian students. Last year they put together a council of elders from across the state to work in an advisory capacity with him. They have met twice and tested out ideas, listened to what's working and what's not. They're trying to determine how higher education can meet the needs of Indian students.

Policy and Planning Committee Report

Steve Meloy reported on behalf of the Committee. He reported that the function of the Board had been going on forever but not in an organized fashion. They have put together bylaws and an operating procedure. The Board of Education doesn't have any authority to make changes in policy. That authority is given to the two boards and OPI. They are trying to give infrastructure to the work they do. Each of the entities in the Leadership Group have offered a staff person for each committee. They are looking forward to having Jan Lombardi with the budget committee. One change is that the Leadership Group will appoint chair persons to each task force or ad hoc committee. The Chair will work with facilitators to set up meeting dates. The Chair can increase or decrease membership. The Leadership Group reserves the right to reexamine the charge to the task force at any time. Any recommendation that comes out of a task force goes to the Leadership Group before it is disseminated to the board.

Writing Proficiency Project and Discussion

Jan Clinard from OCHE reported on the Writing Proficiency Project. She stated that the lack of writing proficiency at the college level is requiring a substantial number of students to take remediation courses, which increases the cost of education. They need to improve teacher quality and student writing. The statistics from the MSU Writing Proficiency Assessment show that in 2001 47.6% scored below three and in 2005 it's only 23.6%. There have been dramatic gains in American Indian scores. 70% of Montana's juniors take the test. Over 100 high schools participate voluntarily. They have trained 621 teachers and are bringing pre-service teachers into working with high school teachers and college instructors. There is a lot of professional development and on-line assistance available. They want to ensure that kids have a high level of skills when they enter college. Prewriting is an essential step in the writing process. They are aligned to Montana K-12 writing standards. The proposed admission standards, as drafted, allow for exemptions. The admissions' staff try to place students in a setting where they will be most successful. They look at all types of information.

Diane Fladmo urged the Board of Regents, before adoption of this standard, to move this for consideration by the Assessment Task Force. They want to improve the performance and preparation of our students in language arts. This needs to be considered within the context of K-12 education. When adding an additional requirement it should be done with careful consideration about what we hope to accomplish.

Patty Myers also encouraged the Board of Regents to refer this to the Assessment Task Force.

John Fuller expressed his reservations and stated that writing is essential to success. He concurred with the Regents that this particular assessment was vital to success.

Mike Foster questioned what the timeline requirements were.

Jan Clinard stated that according to the committee they will make recommendations by January 2007.

Cal Gilbert commented that they had a big discussion on this issue the night before and wanted to know how many districts were a part of the 100 and how well were small schools represented.

Jan Clinard reported that out of 175 high schools – 115 have participated and that small schools were over represented.

Cal Gilbert voiced his concern about the impact on American Indian students.

The Governor called for public comment.

Representative Carol Juneau, Chairperson of the Montana Indian Education Association (MIEA) commented on the writing proficiency assessment. She stated that the MIEA is opposed to the writing proficiency assessment and presented a resolution from that organization. MIEA feels it will be a barrier to American Indian students wishing access to the Montana University System. She provided statistics based on 2004 writing scores to show that many American Indian students would not have access to 4 year institutions. She encouraged working with students to increase writing skills but opposed using the writing proficiency assessment as an admissions criteria.

Representative Norma Bixby stated her concern about the writing proficiency assessment. She runs a scholarship program for the Northern Cheyenne tribe. Once they get to college the student needs to do whatever is expected to stay in the university system. There are programs to give guidelines and to help succeed in the university system. They have a 98% retention rate in the scholarship program in 2 and 4 year programs. Their writing skills may not be good but the kids will do what is expected when they get to university system. She stated that until the achievement gap is closed, we can't set standards like these. She encouraged professional development to train K-12 teachers to make writing a priority for kids and then put in standards. She stated that the board needed to look at all of the barriers American Indian students face in trying to obtain a college education.

Janet Thompson, who has 35 years involvement with curriculum, commented about the writing proficiency assessment. She commended Jan on the work that had been done. She stated that the journey is more than the destination and encouraged growing curriculum in writing connected with reading. She asked that the board consider how assessment fits with minority students, it needs to be culturally sensitive, how it fits with SAT and ACT tests, how the assessment is calibrated, and what data is being used as diagnostic tool by writing professors. She stated that building capacity takes time.

Debra Moray, who teaches English at the University of Great Falls and has taught at MSU, commented that she is engaged in study of American Indian English students and suggested using alternative forms to a persuasive format to address language concerns of American Indian students. She stated that narrative writing samples demonstrate American Indian writing skills better. She noted that writing was a small part of the barriers to these students.

There were no further public comments.

Dr. Miller moved to adjourn the meeting and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Linda McCulloch
Linda McCulloch
Superintendent of Public Instruction